1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
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on whom, but they also brooded long and suspiciously upon who had supported whom and why, either verbally or with spear in hand. In addition, all the incidents of the battle, in minute detail, were relayed to the rest of the tribe who had not been present, and many of these absentees would discover, among the proceedings, things they did not like or suspicious-looking actions on the part of some of their competitors or putative friends. These they would weave into their own strategies and store up for future use. An elder frequently found some basis for a new grievance against somebody in the events of a battle at which he had not even been present.

Finally, through all these disputes and hostile actions between senior men ran their united suspicion of bachelors. The only "battle" in two years between large groups drawn from distinct bands that had a clear-cut and definite final act was one fought in Rangu in late 1928. On that occasion, after disputing and fighting among themselves from early morning until mid-afternoon, all the old men present from both war parties gradually channeled all their anger toward one unfortunate young Mandiimbula bachelor whom they finally accused of going around from band to band creating misunderstandings between various elders. Several elders on both sides testified publicly that their mistrust of each other had started shortly after the bachelor in question had begun hanging around their households; whereupon the senior warriors of the two opposing armies had no difficulty in deciding that most of their suspicions of each other "were all his fault," and with great unanimity ganged up on the bachelor and quickly clubbed him into unconsciousness for being a troublemaker and a suspicion spreader. In the midst of battle the gerontocracy had reasserted its solidarity by finding a bachelor scapegoat upon whom to unload all their mutual suspicions and aggressions.

Religious Activities

If by religious activities we mean those beliefs and practices which pertain to unseen or supernatural forces, including rituals whose performance somehow affects those forces, then Tiwi religion readily crystallized around three focal points. These were: 1) their elaborate system of day-to-day taboos; 2) the elaborate set of beliefs and rituals pertaining to death; and 3) their complicated initiation ceremonies for young men. Add to these their myths and folklore about creation and their tribal past, and the whole of Tiwi religion has been covered. Space permits only brief mention of these three focal points.

TABOO In earlier chapters we have pointed out several aspects of life in which Tiwi culture diverged sharply from what anthropologists have come to regard as Australian mainland norms and we have suggested that these differences from the mainland are most reasonably to be attributed to either Tiwi isolation or favorable food supply, or some combination of both factors. In their religious life this same line of explanation continues to have validity. To those familiar with the cultures of Australian tribes, perhaps

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
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nothing is so startling as to be told that the Tiwi almost completely lacked what we must call "positive" magic. Such familiar mainland practices as bone pointing or "singing" a man to injury or death were completely unknown on the islands, and though references to people dying through supernatural agency were often made, it was very hard to find any positive techniques or known practitioners of such techniques. Briefly the Tiwi may be said to have believed that magical acts were possible but to have lacked any knowledge of how to perform them. If, as anthropology is wont to teach, magic is used in the simpler societies to handle and control the unpredictable or mysterious areas of life, then this absence of magic among the Tiwi needs an explanation. Our hypothesis is that the Tiwi did not use magic in human relations because they had never invented magic for use in other unpredictable areas of life—for example, to control the natural world. And they had never invented magic to control their natural world because their physical environment was on the whole a satisfactory and not a hostile universe.

If we run through the areas of life that many of the simpler peoples use magical means to control, we find that many of them were not problems for the Tiwi. The rainfall and water supply were more than adequate; the food supply was good, needing only people to come and gather it; wild animals (except snakes and crocodiles) were unknown; tropical diseases (except yaws) scarcely existed; cyclones, tornados, and earthquakes were very rare, and thunder and lightning were no more frightening there than in, say, Chicago. Death, of course, is mysterious and unpredictable everywhere, but to handle that they had most elaborate burial and mourning customs that were not magical but collective rituals. Perhaps the most favorable feature in the whole friendly Tiwi universe was the absence of any neighboring tribe. Their cultural isolation removed all fear or suspicion of what the foreigners next door might be up to, and one gets the impression from the literature, though it has not been systematically explored, that the hotbeds of magic making and sorcery were areas of the primitive world, like Melanesia or Central Australia, where people were acutely conscious of their neighbors and always expecting magic and sorcery to be directed by them across the village or tribal boundaries. The Tiwi, having no neighbors, had nobody to be suspicious of except each other, and their suspicions of each other were mostly rational suspicions, of men motivated like themselves and using the same political tricks against each other.

The strongest support for the hypothesis that the Tiwi found their environment a friendly and reassuring universe to live in comes from their wide elaboration and reliance upon the negative form of magic called taboo. As a tribe they were magic free but taboo ridden. Their generic word for anything sacred or forbidden or untouchable was *pukimani*, a word which in its most common form referred to a state of special being in which a person or thing temporarily was. Thus mourners were *pukimani* for the period of their mourning, youths undergoing initiation were *pukimani* during the ceremonies, a woman who had just given birth was *pukimani* for a week or two afterwards. Dead bodies were *pukimani* until buried; graveposts were *pukimani*

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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775 the white man came, would have been its totemic place. As the *mopaditi*
[825] travels, flocks of screeching black cockatoos fly overhead to tell the spirits as its birthplace, that a new *mopaditi* is coming to live with them. The local spirits, on its arrival, rush out to welcome the *mopaditi*, beating themselves over the head and shoulders[81] with throwing sticks to indicate their pleasure. At its new home, no matter what its previous state, the spirit is transformed into a young person of good health and equable temperament, for, in the land of the spirits, everyone must be healthy, happy and at peace with each other.

Making its camp with the other *mopaditis*, many of whom were old companions, the new spirit goes out hunting and foodgathering with them until the beginning of its own burial ceremonies. Then, with all of its dead relatives, the new *mopaditi* returns to watch the living people perform the dances and chant the songs of its *ilania* and *pukamuni* ceremonies.

As the *mopaditis* are invisible to mortal eyes, the performers at the burial rituals do not see them, although they know the *mopaditis* are in the surrounding forest, watching all that is going on.

When the rituals of the day are over, and all the people have gone to sleep, the *mopaditis* themselves enter the ceremonial ground, carrying out the same dances, and chanting the same songs as those of the living. This happens at all ceremonies, whether they are the *ilaniqs*, the final *pukamuni*, or the *kulama* rituals.

At the conclusion of its final *pukamuni*, the new *mopaditi* returns to its birthplace. There it is treated as a youth, and has again to pass through all stages of the *kulama* initiation, progressing at the same rate as when it was a living person.

Occasionally parties of *mopaditis*, especially if not long dead, will return to have a look at their living friends and relatives. But, although the aborigines regard these *mopaditis* as well-mannered and kindly, they still fear them.

[781] Sometimes, particularly at night, a *mopaditi* will follow an aboriginal too
[789] closely, making his skin clammy and his hair rise on end. To protect himself, the affrighted person calls out loudly to scare away the spirit. If this is not successful, he will kindle a fire or carry a torch of flaming bark, knowing that the *mopaditis* fear the light. For that reason, the aborigines are safe from the attacks of the spirits of their dead so long as they keep their camp-fires burning.

[576] [81] This is the custom of the living when they meet someone they have not seen for a long while.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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765 (i) The ceremonial fight between the *pukamuni* men and the "workers" returning from cutting the poles which are near the grave.

(ii) The feeding of the "workers" by the *pukamuni* men and women.

(iii) The totemic songs and dances.

(iv) The *punasi*, in which married men and women beat the relatives of their spouses with boughs.

(v) The rite of fire-jumping (*wandiatapinda*).

(i) *The Ceremonial Fight.* When, late in the afternoon, the "workers" were returning to the *milimika* from the grave site, where they have been cutting the burial poles, they announced their coming with the honey and mosquito calls.

The *alowia*, who had assembled the *pukamuni* men in the *milimika* in readiness for this ritual, answered with the honey call.

The "workers" emerged from the forest in a body and, running toward the men in the *milimika*, cast short sticks, as spears, at the *pukamuni* men, who replied vigorously with throwing sticks, neither group of contestants, however, trying to hit the other.

The "workers" having exhausted their spears, rushed into the *milimika*, where, to the accompaniment of much laughter and good-humour, they wrestled with the *pukamuni* men (Pl. 25D), until they (the "workers") were pushed out of the *milimika*.[63]

(ii) *The Feeding of the Workers.* It is the duty of the *pukamuni* group to feed the "workers" while they are cutting and painting the poles.

On the edge of the *milimika* were two baskets, both painted red, one made by a woman of the rain and freshwater totem of Wailu, and the other by a woman of the fire totem of Wuriupi, the totemic place of the dead man, *Waniamperi*. Food caught or gathered by the *pukamuni* men and women was cooked and placed in those baskets for the "workers" only, it being taboo to all members of the *pukamuni* group.

After the "workers" had been "vanquished" in the ceremonial fight, the *pukamuni* men carried the baskets[64] into the centre of the *milimika* and there stood guard while the "workers" had their meal (Pl. 25B).

[184] [775] [789] [63] There is so clear-cut belief behind this ritual. Some informants said that the "workers", having been adjacent to the grave for many hours, were inhabited by *mapaditis* who must be driven out before the "workers" are "safe" to associate with the *pukamuni* group; others said that the *mapaditis*, following close on the heels of the "workers" had to be frightened away by what, to them, appeared to be a real fight, before the *ilanias* could start.

[64] These baskets, though they always stood on the edge of the *milimika*, were not often used in the *ilanias* we witnessed, as the participants were able to get most of the food they required from the settlement. If, however, the burial ceremony had been held at some remote place, the *pukamuni* men and women would have had to spend the day in hunting in order to provide food for the "workers".

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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776 The *Maratjis* belong to the totem of *Andjaki* (fresh water), in common with *Pakadringa* (thunderstorms), *Tomituka* (monsoon rain) and *Bumerali* (lightning). They are mortal creatures who die and disintegrate like everything else (Pl. 48D).

[123] I collected bark paintings and crayon drawings of a number of *Maratjis*, living with their wives and families in three lagoons on Melville and Bathurst Islands, i.e., Maundu, southern Bathurst Island, and Kulimbini, north-western, and Maratjiana, northern Melville Island.

776 778 The *Maratjis* of Melville and Bathurst Islands are not always of the same temperament. For instance, the *Maratjis* who live at Kulimbini (Pl. 48A) are so dangerous that should any aboriginal dare approach their water, they will steal his *imunka* (spirit), and he will die.

Although the *Maratjis* of Maundu (Pl. 48C) are feared, it is possible, if certain rituals are performed, for even a stranger to drink the water without harm; while those who live in the Maratjiana lagoon at Goose Creek, are looked upon by the aborigines as "properly quiet fellow".[49]

776 821 The rainbow, as a *Maratji*, however, is universally feared, the aborigines believing that the primary bow is the *imunka* (spirit) of a male, and the secondary bow, that of a female *Maratji*.

● [789] If a rainbow goes too near an aboriginal camp, the occupants will quickly build up their fire[50] and call out to frighten *Maratji* away, but should he come too close, the people will feel ill and break out into a cold perspiration. If an aboriginal is overtaken by a rainbow,[51] it will kill him by taking his spirit.

Should some aboriginal be so foolish as to throw a spear at a rainbow and injure it, the *Maratjis* would destroy the whole country and the people who live in it.

776 821 648 Two heavy wind-storms, which occurred whilst the expedition was at Melville Island, were supposed to have been caused by angry *Maratjis*. The first was due to some foolish aboriginal who broke a *kulama* ceremony taboo (p. 142) by throwing some of the termite mound from the *kulama* oven into the sea. The second happened when a *pukamuni* pole, taken from a grave by one of the senior officers of the Native Affairs Branch, was being loaded on a boat for transport to Darwin.

The aborigines explained that as these poles are a gift from the living to

[49] Further research will no doubt reveal other waterholes on Melville and Bathurst Islands, inhabited by *Maratjis*.

[171] [50] This would suggest that *Maratji*, like the *Wonambi* of the Central Australian deserts, is afraid of fire (Mountford, 1948, p. 138).

[51] These conditions are, of course, impossible because the rainbow is always several feet from the observer.

11:Goodale E-5 (1954, 1962) 1963 CX20 Tiwi CX20

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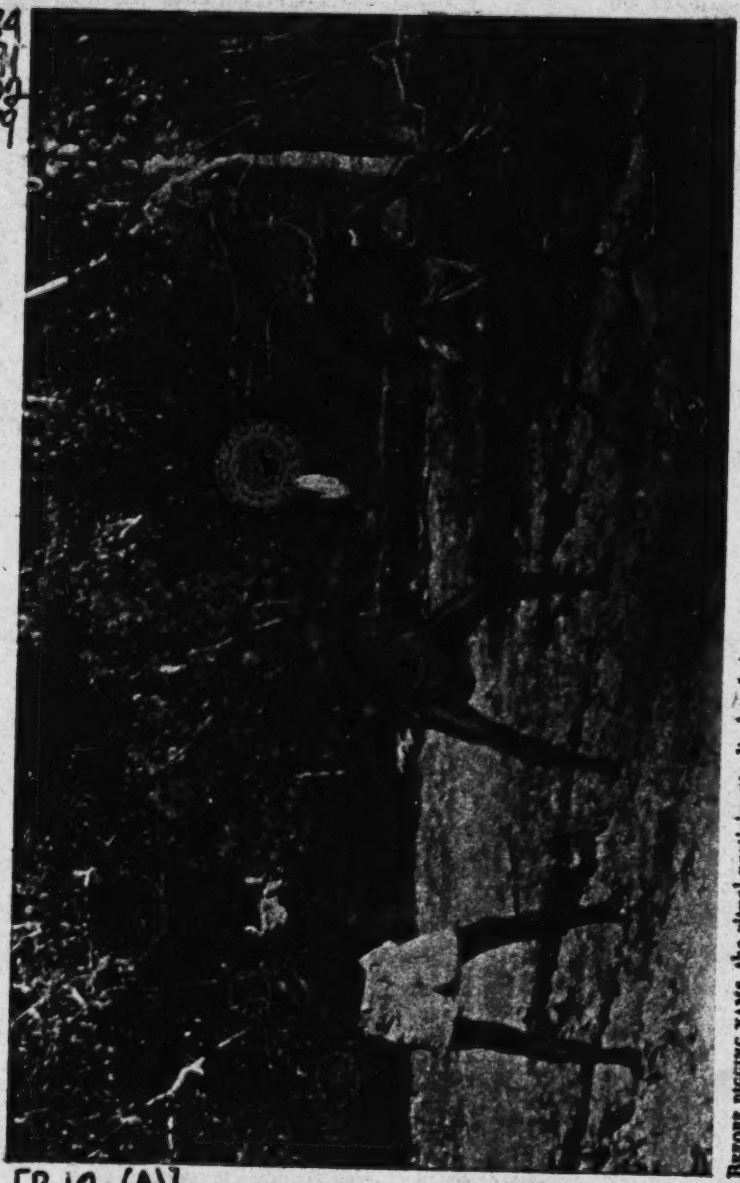
●789



BEFORE DIGGING YAMS, the ritual participants dip hands into white paint and put it around eyes to insure acute vision.

[P. 12, (A)]

12:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1957 0120 Tiwi 0120

disembarked on the edge of a large expanse of wet, grassy marsh. On the bank a few low trees provided cover for the hunters, who spread out about fifty yards apart. We waited. Then in the distance the first flock of six geese appeared, flying low over the marsh. They were not headed for us, but passed over the line of hunters about a hundred yards upstream. We could not see the hunters, but the same six geese continued safely after passing the firing line. Now another small group of geese seemed to be heading in our direction. Albert slowly took his position, his legs apart, the left stretched in front, the right somewhat bent as his body arched backward. One *milingani* he held near the charred end in his right arm which was so far back over his head that the tip of the stick almost touched the ground. As counter balance, his left hand, holding several spares, was pointed forward toward the geese. Just as the geese were to pass over our heads, they swerved and went instead over the man to the right of us. You could hear the whir of the stick as it was thrown with tremendous force up into the air, turning end over end, and then the 'thwack' as it reached its mark. A goose, its neck hanging loosely, spiralled down, to land with a splash close to the hunter's feet.

Now the flocks were more numerous as the dusk grew thicker. Soon a group flew directly overhead and Albert aimed and threw, but the spiralling stick slid off the wing tip of the lead goose and he continued, somewhat shaken but quite unharmed. Again and again Albert threw at the increasing numbers of honking homeward-bound geese, but when the last stick was thrown and it was quite dark, we still had no geese. When we gathered, it was found that out of ten hunters with perhaps three hundred sticks thrown, only two sticks had found their mark. This was not good. Albert was worried. "Maybe someone bin die, make me bad luck."

Later that evening Black Joe started singing a chant. "*Mobuditi*, plenty goose here; give us some." I asked him whom he was singing to and, although names of the dead are most infrequently mentioned for fear that the ghost of that person, its *mobuditi*, will hear it, this was one occasion where the *mobuditi* could do more good than harm. So the *mobuditi* of Bangri was called upon. Bangri, it was explained, had been a big man, "Plenty wives, maybe hundred. This his country; him grave close up along

12:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1957 OI20 Tiwi OI20

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Fig. 35. Weather-worn poles mark the grave of someone long dead but not forgotten

223 bush. He bin die long time ago." This had been his country while
●789 alive and it was still his country, for his spirit remains near the
775 grave and still hunts the wild animals and birds, while the spirits of his wives collect the wild yams, and his little spirit children play in the bush. Bangri will share this food with others who come, and their *mobudities*, should they die and be buried in the country, for as long as his name is remembered, and until his grave-posts rot with the passing of time.

123 But Bangri was not cooperative. The next day the hunters found little game in the bush and the women turned to the laborious
[222 job of digging six-foot holes with a stick to obtain the small yams
224] that are to be found at this season. Again the grass was too thick, the snakes too cheeky, and Albert advised against our going bush.
[152 I decided the more logical explanation was that Albert considered
777] we ourselves had ample food, and besides he was sincerely worried about his long run of bad luck. But he left with the others that
[223]